



A shocking fate for thousands of endangered falcons

Tens of thousands of birds of prey are electrocuted at power lines worldwide every year. The situation is especially bad in Central Asia where an estimated 4000 globally endangered Saker Falcons are killed each year along with thousands of other birds of prey including eagles. The Saker Falcon is the focus of an extensive programme to provide artificial nesting sites, producing over 2500 young falcons last year, but the number of young produced in this conservation project is dwarfed by those are electrocuted when they perch on poorly designed power poles.

The Saker Falcon is the only falcon species to be classified as Globally Endangered and is the subject of a Global Action Plan developed under the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS). Electrocution of Saker falcons is becoming recognized as the most significant cause of population decline. The Saker's range extends well into Southern Europe, through Romania, Bulgaria, Hungary and Austria where, despite strict regulations, poor electrical transmission infrastructure still exists resulting in accidental electrocutions on powerlines. The situation becomes much worse in Asia. A study, funded by the Environmental Agency of Abu Dhabi conducted with the Eastern Energy System power company in Mongolia demonstrated the electrocution of 55 Saker falcons per 10 kilometres of power-line per year on a test section. Electrocution rates can be significantly reduced at a cost of less than €18 per power pole. In Hungary, projects to make powerlines safe have been particularly successful but these must be extended. Even more importantly, new transmission lines and the renovation of old lines must incorporate simple measures to make these lines safe for large perching birds.

On World Migratory Bird Day, 9th-10th May, the theme is Energy – Make it Bird Friendly; the International Association for Falconry and Conservation of Birds of Prey is raising awareness of the disastrous levels of electrocutions and encouraging investors (both private and public) in electrical grids to insist on bird-friendly on pole installations.

You can find more about World Migratory Bird day at <https://www.thunderclap.it/projects/23461-world-migratory-bird-day-2015?locale=en> .
#WorldMigratoryBirdDay .

Background information on electrocution of birds of prey can be found in a document on protecting birds from power lines, adopted by the Conseil de l'Europe, may be found here: http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/cultureheritage/nature/bern/documents/072011_IKB/Protecting_birds_from_powerlines.pdf

Action Points Listed In the Budapest Declaration on Bird Protection and Power Lines may be found here:

<https://wcd.coe.int/com.instranet.InstraServlet?command=com.instranet.CmdBlobGet&InstranetImage=2515534&SecMode=1&DocId=2015428&Usage=2>